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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that explored Mexican-American female principals' perceptions of leadership, power, and caring. Interviews were conducted with six principals of public schools in the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas. The principals described the personal and social challenges of being Mexican-American and female, and those of living and working as professional educators in a bicultural, male-dominated community. They discussed acculturation issues, their views on leadership and power, the ethic of caring, and the preparation of relational leaders. The principals' leadership styles utilized collaboration, teamwork, shared decision making, and tolerance for diversity. Increased emphasis is needed in recruitment of minorities and in the development of teachers and administrators with increased multicultural sensitivity, skills, and appreciation. The curriculum must include a variety of cultural and gender-related perspectives. (LMI)

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Mexican American Female Principals- In Pursuit of Democratic Praxis and a Legacy of Caring

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Mexican American Female Principals - In Pursuit of Democratic Praxis and a Legacy of Caring

Carolyn S. Carr

Overview

During the past several months I have conducted a series of extended interviews with Mexican American female principals in the Rio Grande Valley region of Texas. With these women the concepts of leadership, power, and caring were explored in the context of a predominantly Mexican American community culture. The personal and social challenge of being Mexican American and female, and living and working as a professional educator in a bicultural, male dominated community presented unique challenges to these women. They described the difficulties of finding their balance between and within two worlds. Their insights into issues of concern may serve to inform the larger society which is increasingly multicultural. There are also important implications for administrative preparation programs.

Regional Description

To enable understanding of the environment of these women principals, let me share some regional information related to schools. Enrollments in Texas public schools in the Texas border area are rising at rates in excess of 16%, twice the rate in the state as a whole. One out of every four of these students will drop out of school. There is a high migrant and recent immigrant student population (An estimated 23% of the border population is migrant.), and a high poverty rate, with

one of every two children in the border area living in poverty. The border population is predominantly Mexican American (79%), with over 50% of the adults estimated as 'not speaking English well.' The 64 border school districts strive to educate over 400,000 students, 30% of whom are classified as 'English as a Second Language' (ESL) students (Office of the Governor, 1993).

Nationally, 27% of public school principals are female, and of those only 6.4% are minorities. 73% are male, and of those 8% are minorities (Montenegro, 1993). In contrast to the distribution on a national level, in this region of Texas the school principals are largely Mexican American. It is within this environment and with these common understandings of educational needs, that these six principals administer their schools. Three of the women are elementary principals; three are high school principals. One of the high school principals is Anglo. Four of these principals work in one district where, of the 43 principals, 76% are Mexican American. Of these 42% are female and 58% are male. The importance of this lies in recognition that in the communities of this region, the 'minority' Mexican American population is in the 'majority.' A brief description of each of the women follows.

Subjects of the Study

All six women have lived most, if not all their lives in this region of Texas. Laura, an elementary principal, is an attractive, poised, stylishly dressed woman. In her own words, she, "tends to do things quietly, but with alot of punch." She was born in Mexico City, and came to the United States with her parents, both of whom had college degrees. She describes herself as Mexican American. She was educated in private Catholic schools and is fluent in Spanish and English. All four of her siblings have college degrees. She is married and has two grown children, both

college educated, whom she describes proudly as highly motivated and successful. Laura has spent her career in this area, and was named principal of her first school during the previous school year. Her school is in an extremely poor area, where crime is common and shootings not unusual. The building shows the effects of age, overcrowding and hard use, though it is clean and proud banners are displayed outside the entrance.

Anna was born and raised in this city where her extended family had lived for generations. She and her five siblings were educated in public schools, and all have college degrees. She is the youngest of the six principals, attractive, highly energetic, and lively. She is fluently bilingual and proud of her Mexican American heritage. Her parents had an elementary, and high school educations. She speaks of her husband and family with pride, but focuses most of the interview on her school. She is obviously excited to be the first principal of this new and attractive school in an upper class Mexican American neighborhood.

Celia had grown up as one of 12 children and was educated in the Rio Grande Valley where her family had lived in the same small town for several generations. She spoke of herself as Hispanic, and was fluently bilingual. All her siblings had college degrees, some from prestigious universities, and both parents had high school educations. Celia was married, had one child, and spoke of extensive family travel and continuing educational experiences. Celia was in her first principalship and was the first principal of a new elementary school in an upper class Mexican American neighborhood.

Marla's parents were first generation Mexican Americans. She had grown up approximately 150 miles from the valley area, was educated in public schools and was fluently bilingual in Spanish and English. Her parents, with an elementary and a high school education themselves, had worked hard to encourage their two

daughters to obtain their college degrees. Marla had married a native of the valley and moved here after working in a large city Educational Service Center for a period of years. She had been named to this, her first principalship, only the year before, and was the first female in the position. A small person physically, Marla exudes enormous energy and pride in her school, while at the same time strongly affirming that her two children and family are the primary focus in her life.

Serena, a high school principal, is single, but claims all 2000 of her students as her own. She describes having changed her ethnic identity preference recently from Mexican American to Hispanic, though the reasons are not quite clear to her. She is one of 4 children of immigrant parents. Her parents had only a few years of formal education, but all 4 siblings had been educated in Catholic schools and 3 had received their college degrees. Serena is fluent in both Spanish and English. She described herself as a very shy, insecure child who found herself through the mentoring of a dance teacher. Her education and work experience have taken her the farthest afield, even abroad, and she describes herself as one who works and plays equally hard. She has held numerous administrative positions in the school district, including that of assistant superintendent, a position she very much enjoyed and hopes to return to someday. Named unexpectedly to head this high school, she found herself in a school with many academic and personnel problems, all of which she undertook with energy and dedication.

Barbara, the lone Anglo in this group, has lived in the valley since marriage to her Mexican American husband, a period of 20 years. Previously she had lived all across the United States and had been educated in various public schools. Her parents had 8th grade educations; her 4 siblings had high school diplomas. After working as teacher and assistant principal in the district, this was her first principalship, and she found it both stimulating and challenging. She spoke with

deep appreciation of her husband who strongly supported her professional goals, and, though teased by his Mexican American male friends, had progressed from the traditional 'machismo' male to a 'Mr. Mom' over the years of their marriage. This is a trend alluded to by Padilla (1993) who asserts that the concept of 'machismo,' long an accepted part of the male Hispanic culture, may be changing because of acculturation and the feminist movement among Hispanic women. She described their devotion to their two daughters and of their extra effort to spend quality time with them as they were now becoming teens. Barbara described playing a dual role with her in-laws, a professional woman and as the traditional and dutiful Mexican American homemaker.

Acculturation Issues

Knowing these general points of information regarding the ethnic and social group identity of these women is helpful in developing an understanding of their experience and world views. The generational status of their families and the individuals' preferences for language, Spanish or English, as well as the ethnicity each claims for herself helps to clarify for us her level of acculturation into the larger U. S. Anglo society (Padilla, 1995). Anna jokingly revealed her pride in being Mexican American.

> *The Anglo principals usually run Anglo schools. Now this is an Anglo school. Now the reason I say that--we are 100% Hispanic. But the percentage of children's parents are working parents, Mexican Americans in the community who see themselves Anglo, =1. It is called a "coconut campus"--brown on the outside, whities on the inside! But I am definitely not a coconut! Ha. No*

disrespect to anyone....

Each of the principals spoke of the importance and close relationships they had with their extended families, many still living only short distances apart. Each was quick to identify herself as a Mexican American. Even Barbara, the Anglo, used this term when identifying her husband's ethnicity and describing the importance of raising her children in a bicultural family. Only Serena, single, and a world traveler, had begun to use the term Hispanic, but was unable to verbalize her reasons for doing so. None of the women would use the terms 'Chicana' or 'Latina,' because of the political connotations of the terms. Serena explains

> *For a long long time I really just called myself a Mexican American, and I didn't go for any other Latina or Chicana or anything like that. Those kinds of terms really turned me off. But lately I've been using Hispanic, and I really don't know why. I guess just because there is a change in thinking and uh, but uh the other terms I think to me refer to perhaps people who had felt...they had to rebel or show aggression in some manner. I see that because of where I live I don't feel the same way, and because my mother was born in Mexico, my father was born in Spain, and I was born here, I felt closer to being called Mexican American. And then lately, I don't know, now that you bring it up I didn't realize it until you asked the question, I consider myself Hispanic. I am a local yokel so to speak.*

All six women valued being fluently bilingual. Barbara described studying Spanish in college, but had to rely largely on translators now. She felt language often became a power issue in the Valley, with Hispanics sometimes using it for

control over monolingual Anglos. On the other hand, Laura described this revealing incident, which reflects the value expressed by the Mexican American principals for preservation of both languages.

> *Right now we are at the stage to propose to the district a dual language program here. Our children are not learning the English fast enough and then they forget Spanish too soon, maybe by choice. They want to forget Spanish once they learn English. It's there but they don't want to use it. And that to me is very sad because our kids come form homes where almost no English is spoken so that means that communication at home breaks down. I think if we start a dual language program, it would help both things. They would see that Spanish is important to us... yes we promote bilingual, but when I make announcements I make them in English. When I go into the classroom to talk to their teacher, I talk to them in English. Some of the kids...and this hurts... some of the kids come up to me and try to talk in English to me, when they hardly know any, because they think I don't speak it. I don't speak Spanish! Ok, and when they find out I speak Spanish, they say, "ahh you do??" That sort of hurts. Because that tells me I'm not doing my job in that area. I'm not setting a good example for them in the area of language--telling them by speaking Spanish myself that it is valuable and we should use it. Even in the classroom you have the bilingual. For example, some of the teachers might set it up so that they do the English over <u>here</u> and let the <u>assistant</u> do the reinforcement in Spanish over <u>there</u>. What's that telling the kids? The teacher is more important, the assistant is less important. The teacher talks English, assistant talks Spanish. What*

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are you telling the kids? You're not saying it, but they get the message.....

During the extended interviews I conducted with each of these six women, I tried to synthesize an image of what being a Mexican American and a female contributed to being a school principal. I was struck by the strong identification of these women with 'la familia' as they described their lives within the Mexican American community. Each had a strong sense of self identity with her extended family, with her local community, her Catholic faith, and with her culture. Each demonstrated a respect for hierarchy within the family in both age and male gender. Anna describes this clearly.

> *That is how it was instilled in me as a little girl. Dad was in charge, you know. As I grew up every male person that had any type of control over my educational background-it was a man, and you respected him, and that's the way it was.*

All spoke of avoiding conflict through compromise, and of protecting family honor. The importance of the family over the individual was clear, yet each also asserted the value of the individual, 'la persona,' through treatment with dignity and respect. Each valued the right to keep her own thoughts private and to conceal emotion during conflict or in public situations. Serena described accepting an unsolicited job change in this way. [1]

> *Those that were not invited or accepted were really down. Alot of 'nobody wants us' and 'who's gonna be the principal?' Nobody knows, speculating----so I thought to myself at that point in time-- I WAS FIT TO BE TIED!! I thought to myself, I can feel sorry for myself,*

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or I can do something for the school, so when I walked back into my office, I told them I want you to congratulate the next principal. And they did!! So anyway, 7 a.m., I had faculty meeting in the gym and one whole side is filled to capacity. Everybody wondering what I'm going to say. And I assured them that I was coming and that I wanted to be there. And you know, I was really positive, real excited, real enthused, wore my best suit.

Courtesy and good manners were held in high esteem and were expected even among young children. Anna explains

They [Health and Kinesiology teachers] teach 3 classes of PE and 2 classes of social skills and health. Everybody here knows how to say thank you, please, you're welcome. And if we could do that at the other campuses.....they would be alot better.

Celia adds

You know that's real important to me that they treat each other kindly. I don't expect them to be best friends, but to be kind to one another and to show respect! Academics are important but so are human beings.

Gangotena (1993) affirms these descriptors of the Mexican American culture and contrasts these values with the Euro-American vision of the family as a nuclear structure, today largely devoid of extended generational connection or unified

religious connection. Further, this contrasted culture is described as permissive in child rearing, flexible in gender roles, and highly individualistic.

With this introduction to the study and description of the subjects as individuals, I move now to the main body of the interviews, during which I asked questions related to these women's professional lives, including their views on leadership, power, and caring.

Views on Leadership

Each of the principals was asked about her career path leading to the principalship, whether or not she had ever had a mentor, and to describe her leadership style. All except one described primarily a male principal who had served in a mentoring role. Gosetti and Rusch describe the

> myths that become standards for success as school administrator are male models of discipline and power, business (also male) models of the administrative science, and anti-intellectual models of training that focus on mentoring by skilled and traditional veterans (1995, p. 20).

These women also mentioned their mothers or sisters as hard working and inspiring role models. Serena describes her sister.

> *My sister, who's 9 years older than I am was a teacher, elementary school teacher. We lived behind a project in town. The school where she taught was a neighborhood school close by and I recall that my sister was a very dedicated person. At mealtime she would discuss the kids, how well they did -she was*

worried about someone and it seemed like all we talked about were her kids. My sister's a perfectionist. I am NOT! I think that might have been the only pressure that I ever had, really. ..cause there's nobody like my sister. So anyway, the community would come to our home. I remember my mother having conversations at the gate, with parents of these kids my sister had, and they talked about how good she was and how she cared, and how they respected her. She was invited to be the madrina for everything under the sun. And I thought to myself, you know what, that's what I want to do. I want to have kids. I want to be like my sister and I want to be respected the way she's respected.

The National Policy Board for Educational Administration, in its 1993 standards for principals includes in the Leadership Domain value oriented words such as achievement, advancement, authority, autonomy, financial success, order, recognition and winning, excluding values stressed by these women, such as equity, diversity, tolerance or respect. In the Communication Domain little if any reference is made to issues of special relevance to gender, race and class. In only one of the 21 domains, Philosophy, is there a specific reference to the qualities described by these women as characterizing their leadership styles. (Gosetti & Rusch, 1995). All six stressed collaboration, team work, group decision making, service, respect for others, and tolerance for diversity. Anna describes her participatory leadership style this way:

I'm a global person, not analytical, not straight forward, not black and white- I don't just put salt on food. I want all these different spices to

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come in. So the leadership style is very very global, of course there are situations where I have to be analytical, cause there are call shots I have to do down the middle, I can't sway because of legal aspects of it. But globally I am a jack of all trades. If I hear of a new program going down somewhere, I run over there and if they say limited seating, no room, I offer to be facilitator just so I can be in there to listen. I will pass out handouts, do windows, carry suitcases, and I've done it, believe me!! I am not shy or scared to beg. I have borrowed alot and I guess as far as leadership style, very people oriented. I've done tremendous research, personally reading and talking to people that deal with other people, I have a psychologist as a best friend, so she gives me advice....I believe in being very positive, getting people that project my image,goals and vision. They're my forerunners and I support them completely.

Marla affirms team work.

I'm just another person on this staff. I work real hard to have people work with me the individual, to talk to me, to work with me, the colleague, coworker. And so consciously you know, for instance, my administrators, my assistant principals, I keep referring to them as an administrative team. I see myself more as a mentor...not necessarily as being a force that is going to cause an action or a reaction.

Serena adds collaborative decision making.

I thing I lead by example. I believe in collaborative decision-making.

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Listening is very important. I don't know everything there is to know. And I think by bringing the right people together, ...uh...the answers are here on campus. Our CPOC (Campus Performance Objectives Committee) is very active and they do real good about now being able to impact some of the decisions that are made. I make the final decision, but to be honest, only in one case did I disagree with the committee because they're right. They're on the money.

The descriptions and interpretations of each of these individuals' customary behaviors over time may contribute to a better understanding of this cultural group as a whole in regard to communication and social interaction (Gonzalez, Houston, and Chen, 1993). Mumby asserts that "...it is in communication that we energize and give sense to the structures and the conditions of everyday life, those of human existence and of organizational life"(1988, xi). Mumby further claims that the exercise of power in an organization occurs when one group can frame the interests of another in terms of its own, and this occurs largely through the sense making that occurs in the communication process as described in the examples above.

Tanno (1993) has suggested that ethnic identity evolves through symbols, historical consciousness, social consciousness and strategies as it adjusts to the forces of a dominant culture. The individual growth process of each of these principals evolved in a similar way as their careers, and personal beliefs, have developed. Understanding the relationship between beliefs and group behavior means seeing beliefs in a double role. They shape action to satisfy needs, while at the same time creating new tensions to be released (Krech & Crutchfield, 1948). Serena put it this way:

I don't claim to know everything there is to know. You know you can't have the finger on the pulse unless you are out there, visible, listening. And like I tell you the greatest lesson that I learned when I first came here as was that not everybody is honest and truthful to you and when you start assuming, you are going to make mistakes. And one thing I don't like to hear from people is don't worry...it's not a problem, don't worry. Because there is no such thing....When you get very confident and think you know it all, you start making mistakes.

With these personal views of leadership clearly described, I asked the principals to consider the concept of power in relationship to themselves as educators, for "we cannot separate education from personal experience. Who we are, to whom we are related, how we are situated all matter in what we learn, what we value, and how we approach intellectual and moral life (Noddings, 1992, xiii)."

Views on Power

Dahl defines power as control of behavior, a 'power over' view. Parsons sees power as a system resource enabling achievement of goals through coercion or consensus (Lukes, 1986). The subjects of this study were asked if they had ever been considered pushy, aggressive or controlling. They were then asked to define power and explain how they communicated power.

Laura did not see herself as pushy or controlling. Instead she preferred to collaborate. She defined power as more than authority, the ability to convince people to do things and make them think it was their idea. Anna did not see herself as controlling either, but she too was willing to make decisions when necessary.

I bring my people in and say you are on my right side and on my left, on my level. I will sit back a little bit because I need your feedback.... I really don't know what that is. Because I share that power, that delegation, that wisdom, the little bit that I know about administration, which is alot to a certain extent, I've got groups of people that have always helped me with decisions, even when I was a principal at the other campus before SBDM came into effect. I was practicing this a long time ago. I said wow they named it ! I didn't know it had a name. We've been doing it for a long time. I feel that to a certain extent, depending on the circumstance, I have to have the power -to make decisions or wh ever else, but the situation here is that because of the skill and talent, and something in me, people don't see me as the powerhead, the person with dictatorship skills.

Celia added another dimension to the description of power developed by these women.

I don't know if I would use the word powerful, maybe more influential... I think it's the connotation or the way that it is used and I don't want to say that I'm powerful as in a dictator, not at all. But powerful in the sense that my values, maybe come across or just the way that I think or how I feel things ought to be occurring in school. Then, yes, if I am powerful in that it rubs off on the teachers then that to me is a good powerful, and I think I can be and have been. I don't want to be powerful if it's going to be damaging or harmful in any way, but because it is the right thing to do , it is a good thing to do.

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Clearly these principals incorporate caring with power in their leadership styles. The elements of 'power with' to which they subscribe and which have been presented elsewhere in this paper include those delineated by Hurty.

1. Emotional energy- willingness to use full range of emotion in tending to feelings in work with teachers, students and community
2. Nurtured growth- willingness to nurture any evidence of learning and development in children and teachers
3. Reciprocal talk- talk with versus at by listening and learning from other's points of view; mutual trust
4. Pondered mutuality-keeping others in mind in reflective decision making
5. Collaborative change- work with and involvement of others in transforming schooling (1995, p. 385).

The perspective on power exemplified by all six of these principals includes words of connectedness and caring rather than domination and coercion.

Ethic of Caring

> An ethic of caring arises, I believe, out of our experience as women, just as the traditional logical approach to ethical problems arises more obviously from masculine experience.
>
> (Noddings, 1984, p. 8)

Accessible language, a cooperative atmosphere, shared power, increased teacher authority and responsibility for curricular and pedagogical decisions, and a curriculum and pedagogy for caring can become the foci for change toward thinking

and living in more caring ways (McCall, 1995). These natural patterns of behavior were described repeatedly by all six of the interviewed principals. Marla describes shared power and teacher responsibility:

> *I like to involve the people that are going to make the changes. It it's one teacher in a classroom or a department, I'll involve everybody that has something to do with that.*

> *This school needs to be a place where teachers work with students, and if a teacher is not willing to work with the student, to do their part in as far as being a professional, then they don't have any business being here. I'm not telling them to lower standards, I'm telling them that they need to do something to facilitate the communication with the parent and with the student. If they have done that, then fine, they did what they needed to do.*

Serena captures the concept of pedagogy for caring.

> *She was the first person who forced me to go beyond what I thought were my limitations.... She made a believer out of me and this is what I try to do with kids. And sometimes when kids are feeling bad and they feel the world is against them, I relate this story to them, but maybe in different words. To show them that I know how they're feeling, and that everybody had a gift. Everyone is gifted, but not everybody has opened their packages.*

The importance of a cooperative atmosphere of support and collaboration is shown by Serena here:

> *I would say at the end of the year, if you're not happy here, if you can't embrace the philosophy of education, go to where you can feel good about yourself because an unhappy person does alot of damage to kids. And whenever we interview anyone, what I tell them -you ask all the questions. I want you to come into the position with your eyes open. Because if you're unhappy or it's if not a good situation for your family, it's gonna show, you can fool me any day, but you can't fool kids.*

Anna reiterates the caring attitude she builds in her school through this description of a habitual practice:

> *In the morning I greet the teachers at the side door by the parking lot... I'm in there- 'how's it going, did Janie get better?' 'How's your dad doing since he had a stroke?' The interpersonal skills in the beginning. School hasn't even started and I'm already setting the tone for the day. Someone is having a bad hair day and they come in and their face looks really bad, grrrr- they're late--'Mr. So and So, how're you doing? Doing good today? Tell your face!! Tell your face it's doing good!!' .... I'll be gone 2 days and they'll say 'I know she's not here because she's not in the hallway giving high fives to kids!"*

In Noddings' words, Anna has enjoyed a 'total encounter.'

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> I do not need to establish a deep, lasting time-consuming personal relationship with every student. What I must do is to be totally and non selectively present to the student - to each student- as he addresses me. The time interval may be brief but the encounter is total.
>
> (1984, p. 180)

Laura's previously related concern for bringing a dual language program to her school is an excellent example of curriculum and pedagogy for caring, making changes and recognizing ways her school might be discriminating against or repressing children. Anna encouraged risk taking among her faculty in trying new programs for students.

> *So helping each other is one strategy. The other is if you don't go out into the school community and grow professionally, then you can't come back with anything. So my second priority, besides children #1, is offering opportunities for staff development and inservice training. The latest strategies, whether they're right or wrong, you be the judge, go out there and find out for me. Come back and tell me -good or bad. But when 5 teachers go out and come back this high off the ground and say it's a go! then I continue that fire...We wouldn't know if we didn't try it.*

For all these women, rules and traditions were not sacred. The person, whether parent, student, teacher or staff, was the important thing, valuable and cared for. When asked what traits or characteristics were most important for a

principal in a school with Hispanic children, these principals quickly responded.

It does take a different kind of principal. Because the community will now rule that school. If you have a Hispanic campus the majority of the children come from poor families. So you need a principal that is more compassionate to those needs. A principal not scared to get dirty, do a home visit, not scared to have women cry on their shoulders, and not one to come in and say I don't care about your problems, you're child is still flunking.

We've never been in any other place so I really don't know what would be the difference. Somebody raised here and knew the population or was Hispanic because it helps if you're familiar with little idiosyncrasies. But I don't think an Anglo would do any worse here. I don't. The person here before was an Anglo and they liked him and the parents were very happy with him....He had very little Spanish. Very little. He used translators. And they loved him and the school did well.

For Hispanic populations, I look for someone who is familiar with the culture, understands kids, their needs and their families, where they come from. I have always chosen people for what I believe they can do with the kids, not because they are male or female, or Hispanic or black, etc., and sometimes it gets me in trouble, ha ha. It helps to be role models for your own kids, but that can be detrimental for a Hispanic if heart is in wrong place. Have to do what is good for kids and not be blinded.

A model which integrates the concepts of caring and the power in a way which compliments the description of behaviors favored by these female principals and demonstrated through these interviews is proposed by Regan(1995). The 'double helix' model proposes what Regan has named 'relational leadership.' One strand of the double helix represents five key elements associated traditionally with women, people of color, and low-status white males. Collaboration, the ability to work in a group, creates a synergistic environment capable of commitment for action. Caring, the affinity for both the world at large and its people is the second element. The courage to take risks and brave the unknown on behalf of others is equally essential. A balance of experience and abstraction through intuition is required. Finally, vision, original ideas and the skills to lead others to consider new options completes the strand.

These five elements, combined with the traditional elements associated with people of wealth, status, and power, primarily white males, form the two strands of the double helix to create a balanced relational leadership practice. From such a perspective, leadership practice is no longer seen only from the traditional male-based formulations of leadership. Balance and wholeness derives from unity of the masculine and feminine, not from the exclusion of one or the other (Regan & Brooks, 1995).

The Preparation of Relational Leaders

Having discussed these attitudes of caring and power, awareness of ethnic needs, and concern for effective pedagogy, the issue of school administrator preparation programs was raised with the principals. Each was asked what they felt was essential in the preparation programs for school administrators. Some of their

responses follow.

I believe every administrator should believe they have something special to share/give, make a difference personally. Have to care, and not just say it, show it , demonstrate it, have to listen, and at times lead and at times collaboratively make decisions. ....with cooperative learning you have different responsibilities, extend these to administration and give different roles to show how to support leader, how to support followers. .....Have to be happy with what you are doing. Not enough pay compared to hours, but satisfaction is more important. SBDM makes my job easier and we all feel good. If it gives power away, okay.

My program was effective. We just had the standard courses, theories of management , of supervision and to know you don't have to stick to a theory, to make up your own, but to make sure it has some foundation. I think people who come to your program from areas like PE or music- some have a grasp of what the curriculum is, some don't. That is a strong concern on my part, when I sat through the courses and saw people and I thought my goodness, and they want to be administrators and do curriculum?

There has to be that balance. You have to wear the black and white hat all the time. But in my philosophy of running any kind of program, administrative or not, we would tend to wear the white hat most of time vs the black hat. Talking about justification and the meaning why you do everything. Everything from hiring the staff and budgeting. Involving alot of people in your decisions. Your program would have

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alot of how to literally deal with people. That would be the number one priority. No program, no educational administrative program, no private program will work if you don't have somebody positive at the top. Selling the program, pushing it, constantly learning about ways to improve it, even if its 100%, you go in with 'can I get better?'

The ideas shared here are not the traditional administrative preparation textbook answers. These principals, cognizant of how words and actions in university classrooms translate into action in schools, are proposing a much broader and more inclusive approach to education and administration. They are calling for a recentered program which draws upon the experiences and scholarship of men and women and multiple cultures to transform the understanding of our social world through a more democratic curriculum (Gosetti & Rusch, 1995).

Given the current and future demographic trends in ethnicity, the areas of training, curriculum, and staffing in schools demand attention. Increased emphasis is needed in recruitment of minorities and in the development of teachers and administrators with increased multicultural sensitivity, skills, and appreciation. The predominant emphasis on theory and management techniques must make room for a development of a variety of perspectives, cultural and gender related, within the curriculum. Curriculum must include legitimation of the literature and accomplishments of minority groups in order to overcome the detachment from the schooling enterprise which has caused an enormous and growing dropout rate (Reyes & Valencia, 1995).

Rusch and Marshall(1995) propose a list of new assumptive worlds for preparation programs which sound quite similar to the voices of the Mexican American principals interviewed here.

1) Become risk takers
2) Remake policy democratically
3) Engage in moral dilemmas
4) Dialogue openly about values
5) Redefine loyalty and commitment-based respect for diversity
6) Have equal voice: lines of communication become circles
7) Share role responsibilities in practical ways-client-centered decision making
8) Build team trust around shared values
9) See schooling holistically: real leadership has no turf

Marla puts all that has been said previously into her own inspiring words.

I love the job, I love what I do. I have alot of fun with it, and enjoy it. Tremendously! And I think it has made me a better person. I think I've grown. And I think I've helped alot of people in their search for whatever, you know, in life, and as professionals, as teachers, as students....I feel like I have impacted positively upon alot of people. And that makes me feel good. Because that's what we're about. You know, once you're gone, you're gone. And what you have, what influences you had, is your legacy.

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